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DIA FOR IR BRANCH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PBTS, PGDV, EC, PE

SUBJ: PERU - ECUADOR BORDER INCIDENT: PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS

REF: (A) LIMA 619 (B) LIMA 598

State Dept. review completed

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. DURING CODEL BAKER CALL ON PRIME (AND FOREIGN) MINISTER SCHWALB LATE MORNING JANUARY 17, SENATOR BAKER MADE MENTION OF RECENT INCIDENT ON PERU - ECUADOR BORDER AND ASKED FOR PRIME MINISTER'S EVALUATION OF SITUATION. SCHWALB RESPONDED THAT, FROM GOP VANTAGE POINT, THIS WAS JUST ANOTHER SMALL INCIDENT INVOLVING A BORDER CROSSING BY SOLDIERS IN WHAT IS A CLEARLY DEMARCATED SECTION OF THE BORDER. HE SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT IT WOULD AMOUNT TO MUCH, AND THAT MEDIA WERE MAGNIFYING AND DISTORTING ITS IMPORTANCE. SCHWALB NOTED THAT ECUADOREANS ARE CLAIMING INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN ECUADOREAN TERRITORY, BUT GOP HAS STRONG REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IT OCCURRED ON PERUVIAN SIDE OF BORDER. HE REVIEWED HISTORY OF DISPUTE AND RESTATED IN BROAD TERMS WELL KNOWN PERUVIAN POSITION ON SUBSTANCE OF BORDER ISSUE. SCHWALB STRESSED THAT GOP HAD NO INTEREST IN CROSSING ECUADOREAN BORDER NOR IN CREATING SCANDALS INVOLVING BORDER. TO CONTRARY, HE ASSERTED, THIS WAS ECUADOR'S GAME. ECUADOR SEEKS SCANDALS OF THIS TYPE TO DRAW INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO ITS CLAIMS REGARDING EXISTING BORDER ARRANGEMENT (RIO PROTOCOL). PERUVIAN STRATEGY, SCHWALB STATED, IS NOT TO RESPOND IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVEMENT OF ECUADOREAN OBJECTIVES.

3. COMMENT: SCHWALB'S COMMENTS MAKE CLEAR THAT, AS MATTER OF POLICY, GOP IS DOWN PLAYING BORDER INCIDENT AT THIS TIME, AND HOPING ECUADOR WILL DO SAME.

OGDEN

END OF MESSAGE

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